

SAA's shanty makes valid statement to Aggies

It may seem amazing to some, but the shanty erected by Students Against Apartheid remains standing, to be taken down today by its own members as its permit expires.

Most of you have seen the shanty and have opinions about what it is, what its presence is attempting to accomplish and who the people are who constructed it.

In May of 1985, when South Africa was in the news daily, Norman Murray, a student from Kenya, founded Students Against Apartheid.

Today, Students Against Apartheid is perceived by some as a group of radical liberals. Actually, it is composed of students who are genuinely concerned about the situation in South Africa.

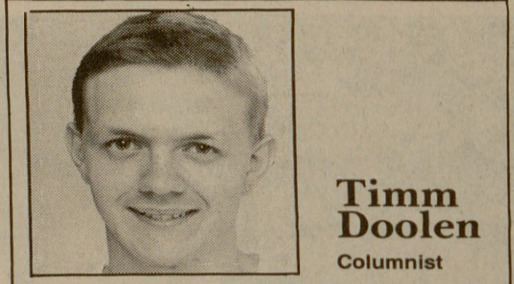
Surprisingly to some, the majority of the group is white. The goals of the organization are definite and pointed: mainly to increase awareness among Texas A&M's students of apartheid's injustices.

South Africa. Dyess said that would entail pulling about four million dollars, roughly 1% of the total worth of A&M, out of big companies such as Kodak and Shell Oil.

The group hopes that if a conservative college like A&M divests, other universities and even corporations will follow our lead and join in on the "divestment bandwagon."

In a realistic tone, Dyess said there is little hope that the group can directly affect the black South Africans or change the white government's policies in any way.

The shanty's purpose was to educate Aggies in any small way about the conditions in South Africa and generally increase awareness and openness of the topic.



Timm Doolen, Columnist

Dyess admits that their movement is more symbolic than anything — an attempt by a few students to outwardly show concern for millions of people who share a different language and a different culture.

For their concern and their actions, they should be commended. They are in an ideological battle with people such as the two men who crucified doves in last spring's shanty.

There are a few people who disagree with SAA's methods or ideals (no rational person is for apartheid), though they are not as visible this year.

nication than destruction on campus. Some claim it should be removed because the shanty is an eyesore and ugly on campus. So what?

I asked Jeff, with the multitude of crises and injustices in the world, why the group chose apartheid as a focus? He said because the issue is divided on a clear-cut racial issue and South Africa is one of the last "democratic" nations in the world that is promoting racial inequality.

I disagree with the group on the question of divestment as a catalyst to the solution of the problem. In the broad spectrum of world events, I happen to favor constructive engagement rather than turning our back on our ally — change from within rather than without.

Recently, South African troops helped fight communism in Namibia and Angola. Fifty thousand communist Cubans are scheduled to leave Africa because of the presence of South African troops.

risk losing an ally such as South Africa as a result of our economic sanctions.

I also wonder whether their efforts couldn't be more greatly rewarded in another realm of worldly concern. Dyess and the group understand they are severely limited in what they can do to directly stop racism and oppression in South Africa.

South Africa is trying to hold its hands of time, but can withstand eventual outcome of racial equality so long. Already changes in labor and marriage have started the process towards a freer South Africa.

South Africa still has generations of progress to undergo with regards to policies, and what remains is a long, tedious, and largely unsatisfying journey towards an unprivileged government. As the shanty disappears from campus today, we may soon forget it stood for or that it stood at all.

Timm Doolen is a sophomore computer science major and columnist for The Battalion.

Mail Call

Student Government 'farsighted'

SOME say that Student Government serves no purpose here at Texas A&M. We, however, must strongly disagree. The student senate's recent decisive, farsighted action to clarify their long-term commitment to the Open Meetings Act displays the crucial role that the institution plays on our campus, especially in light of the Pan American University situation.

Mike Fitch '89 accompanied by four signatures

Dukakis clearly the winner

Gov. Mike Dukakis clearly won the Sept. 27 debate. Dukakis showed that he is not a passionless technocrat, but that he cares deeply about housing, health care, education and defense. Dukakis was cool and in control while Bush appeared bumbly and incoherent. What really came across in the debate was the fact that Dukakis cares about the average American while Bush panders to the wealthy and the ultra right.

Dr. Louise Weingrod

Quayle selection stupifying

I am completely stupified by George Bush's selection of Dan Quayle as his running mate. Quayle's discussions at the debate caused me to view him as an evasive, unclear and almost thoughtless politician. Many of his answers left me saying to myself, "What did he just say?!"

David L. Martin '89

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent.

The Battalion (USPS 045 360) Member of Texas Press Association Southwest Journalism Conference The Battalion Editorial Board Lydia Berzsenyi, Editor Becky Weisenfels, Managing Editor Anthony Wilson, Opinion Page Editor Richard Williams, City Editor D A Jensen, Denise Thompson, News Editors Hal Hammons, Sports Editor Jay Janner, Art Director Leslie Guy, Entertainment Editor

Editorial Policy The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station. Opinions expressed in The Battalion are those of the editorial board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

War on Drugs actually assault on our Constitutional rights

It seems that nearly everyone agrees that the War on Drugs must be won. Yet the price of winning that war may be higher than Americans should lightly pay.

The War on Drugs bears an alarming resemblance to nuclear war: it is a war in which the harm done to innocent victims in the long run is likely to exceed the harm done to the enemy.

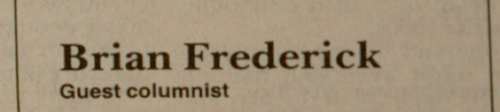
Teresa Miller of Houston, Texas, is one such innocent victim of the War on Drugs. On Sept. 4, Miller was returning with a friend from a shopping trip in Mexico. At Progreso, a U.S. port of entry on the Mexican border, U.S. Customs agents seized her car under the new Zero Tolerance policy against drugs.

Miller's car was not seized to be auctioned because Customs agents had found drugs in the car. They had found no drugs, and both Miller and her friend said they do not even use drugs.

Agents seized her car because they had found "paraphernalia" — two fifty-cent onyx pipes — that Miller's friend had purchased as a gift for a friend. Thus, to punish the "crime" of her friend, Customs agents will auction off Miller's car, on which she still owes \$5,800, if her appeal is rejected.

The Zero Tolerance Policy, which became effective March 21, was designed to curtail the demand for drugs. Under it, 474 vehicles had been seized through June in Texas, Oklahoma, Arizona and New Mexico alone.

The Miller case graphically illustrates



Brian Frederick, Guest columnist

the dangers to our liberties inherent in the present strategy for the War on Drugs. And the potential for abuse is not limited merely to that inflicted by overly zealous law enforcement officers.

Municipalities seeking to raise money could easily abuse Zero Tolerance, potentially leading to many more cases like Miller's. Private individuals could use it to advantage, too. Placing a small amount of a controlled substance in someone's car or boat and then calling the police would be a simple way wreak vengeance on that hated someone.

On Sept. 19, the Washington Post described a drug bill before the House, which holds even greater potential for abuse by the authorities.

Among other provisions, the bill would greatly broaden an existing exemption to the "exclusionary rule," which prevents the use of illegally seized evidence in federal criminal trials.

How a law enforcement officer could think that he was conducting a constitutional search without a warrant

when the Fourth Amendment requires warrants for searches is difficult to conceive. However, it is at all difficult to conceive how this attempted assault on drugs would threaten the liberties of all Americans.

Perhaps in their effort to ingratiate themselves with the voters in this election year by appearing tough on drugs, our Congressmen have forgotten that the Constitution was written to supply a government of law that would secure Americans from arbitrary government by the whims of men.

The drug bill before the House would replace true law with arbitrary whim by making each police officer a judge of what constitutes a constitutional search. Were all policemen wise and benevolent, this could conceivably be tolerable.

Both the Zero Tolerance Policy and the House bill pose a threat to our fundamental liberties and need to be examined. Unfortunately, politicians and the media have put America in a state of near frenzy over the issue of drugs, and such a state is not conducive to effective debate or reflection.

But Americans cannot afford to accept the present strategy against drugs without debate and reflection. The War on Drugs may eventually curb our society of drugs, but as it is currently being waged, it can harm success without ridding us of our liberties as well. That is a war we cannot afford to win. Brian Frederick, an A&M graduate currently studying history at the University of Washington, is a former columnist for The Battalion.

BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed cartoon strip. Panel 1: 'HELLO, YOUNG UNDERCLASS YOUTH... I'M FROM THE GOVERNMENT...' Panel 2: 'WE'D LIKE TO KNOW WHY YOU PREFER A LIFE OF CRIME MAKING \$20,000 A WEEK SELLING SCALP TONIC...' Panel 3: 'WHEN YOU COULD BE WORKING HONESTLY AT McDONALDS?' Panel 4: 'ALLERGIC TO FRENCH FRIES' Panel 5: 'OH, I HATE A PROBABLY FOR THE' (partial)